

All Governments complain of factious obstruction. All Oppositions indignantly repel the charge. The real explanation of all the failures is the same, if we make allowance for the single difference that Liberal Governments have been hampered also by the resistance of the House of Lords. But even if the veto of the Lords were abolished, Liberals would find themselves—as Tories do now—unable to carry into law all the Bills which they believe the country imperatively requires. The simple fact is that Parliament has got too much to do, and therefore does too little.

These events, says Mr. Balfour, are ominous of inevitable change, but he would not even “adumbrate” the nature of those changes. Perhaps he is thinking of wasting a session or two on more or less futile changes in Parliamentary procedure. We do not say that the procedure of the House of Commons is incapable of improvement—far from it. But it is not now materially worse than the procedure of most other legislative assemblies. If Mr. Balfour were really a philosopher, he must begin to see that the only change which can really make the House of Commons again efficient is a great measure of devolution, which would remove part of the work from an overwrought legislature, and enable it to concentrate its attention on matters of Imperial moment. Such a measure of devolution must begin with Ireland. No other part of the United Kingdom is so clearly diverse in its interests, so clearly beyond the power of the House of Commons to deal with. Even now, when the Irish party is a less efficient Parliamentary instrument than it has been at any time since 1880, and when Ireland is comparatively quiet and prosperous, Irish questions, big and small, absorb a large portion of the time of the House. Ireland gains very little by this prolonged attention. For nine years only one Irish Bill of any considerable importance has become law. She remains with the most antiquated and exclusive system of local government in Europe, not excluding Russia. But Ireland's loss is not England's gain. Owing to her refusal to grapple with the Irish question, England has suffered from a legislative starvation only less severe than the Irish famine. We trust Mr. Balfour will spend the recess in an effort to discover how best he can relieve the Imperial Parliament of Irish business without danger either to Ireland or to the Empire. Many bitter things are being said about Lord Salisbury, but the nephew may well reflect as he looks back on the history of the past decade that if the uncle had been able to carry into effect the policy which he enunciated at Newport in 1885 much loss might have been saved to Ireland and to the Empire. It is not yet too late. Instead of complaining of his opponents or tinkering at the standing orders, Mr. Balfour ought to hasten to relieve Parliament of the incubus which is rendering it inefficient.

#### THE LIBERAL VICTORY IN CANADA.

THE General Election in Canada last Tuesday has resulted in a veritable triumph for Liberal principles—a triumph, too, which ought not to be without its effect on this side of the Atlantic. In the last Parliament of the Dominion the Conservative party had a majority of 49 in a House of 215; in the new Parliament, which consists of 213 members, the Liberals have a majority over all other parties of 24, and the two small groups of

McCarthyites and Patrons are on the chief issues Liberals too. In the Province of Ontario, to which these groups belong, the Liberals have a majority over the Conservatives alone. Even in the coast provinces, ever faithful to Conservatism, they have made considerable gains. In Nova Scotia, Sir Charles Tupper's native province, they actually obtain 11 seats out of 20. In Manitoba itself they gain but one seat, but in British Columbia they are as two to one. But the former province does not exhibit its attitude so clearly in this election as it has already exhibited it in choosing its own Provincial Legislature. For Winnipeg, indeed, Sir John Macdonald's son has been returned—as a Conservative, of course. He was put up because he was so like his father; and he must have been returned chiefly on his name and his face. But the most astonishing and gratifying result is seen in the Province of Quebec. Mr. Laurier, the Liberal leader, had pledged himself to oppose the coercion of Manitoba in the matter of denominational schools. He had undertaken to obtain satisfaction for the Catholics by conciliation instead of by coercion; and the Catholic clergy of Quebec, who have for years been using the real but microscopic grievance of the Manitoban Catholics as a stalking-horse, had officially condemned him and all his prospective supporters. The Province of Quebec, it need not be said, is one of the most devoutly Catholic regions in the world. But a good many of its inhabitants have worked in the United States, and have learned to resist Clerical dictation in politics. Moreover, for the first time in the history of the Dominion, the triumph of the Liberals meant a French-Canadian Premier. Accordingly, in the teeth of all sacerdotal opposition, Quebec is Liberal by 50 seats to 15.

Attempts have been made in some quarters on both sides of the Atlantic to minimise the significance of the results. The issues, we are told, are confused, and consequently the verdict of the electorate was uncertain. It is true that parties were confused; that the Liberals suffered somewhat from the competition of the Patrons of Industry, and the Conservatives a good deal more from the McCarthyite schism in Ontario—which, however, was greatly promoted by the action of the late Government towards Manitoba. But the number of the representatives of these two Dissident groups is trifling; and, as we have said, they too are Liberal in the main. The election is, in the first place, a decisive declaration against the coercion of a province—in other words, in favour of the maintenance of provincial Home Rule. In the next, and as regards the English-Canadians in particular, it implies a distinct preference of an efficient Christian but unsectarian school system against the denominationalism which alone is recognised by the Roman Catholic Church. As we have pointed out before in these columns, that is the usual opinion of the English race—in Canada, as in the United States and Australia—when it gets clear of ecclesiastical influence. Further, in Quebec the result is the heaviest blow ever dealt at the influence of the priesthood in politics; and the defeat both of the Government and of certain suspect candidates on both sides makes for political purity. And, finally, from the Dominion as a whole—and notably from much-protected Ontario—there comes a distinct declaration in favour of Free Trade. It cannot receive practical effect at once; but it is a welcome and peculiarly opportune indication that Canada is finding out her mistakes at last. Moreover, it may fairly be said that the victory has no drawbacks. Canada is more loyal than ever to the British connection; and as to the minute grievance

of the Manitoban Catholics, it may fairly be expected that Mr. Laurier will fulfil his pledge to redress it without breaking up the school system favoured by the great mass of the inhabitants of the province, Catholic and Protestant alike. A victory for Home Rule, for the Free Trade ideal, and for unsectarianism against sacerdotalism, may well give encouragement to Liberals at home.

#### PICTURESQUE IRELAND.

THE meeting on Wednesday at the Imperial Institute in support of the Irish Tourist Association will, we trust, induce many Britons to give themselves the advantage of an Irish tour this summer. There can be no doubt that Ireland has not been visited as she ought to have been. Scotland, which can scarcely rival her in natural beauty, has been overrun by tourists innumerable, to the great profit of her prudent people. It is not that we love the Scots more. Even so fervent an anti-Scot as Dr. Johnson went to Scotland but refused to go to Ireland, even when Boswell asked him. Perhaps there is something in what Mr. Gerald Balfour said, and that Ireland is unvisited because she has had no Sir Walter. But, frankly, we rather doubt whether literature has much to do with the holidays of the ordinary man. Though it may seem snobbish to say so, we believe that the example of the Queen, by setting the fashion, has had more to do than all the Waverley Novels with the development of Scotland and the neglect of Ireland. This is an unfortunate mistake which cannot now be rectified. Perhaps the next best thing to a royal visit, as a means of attracting our fashion-following middle classes, is a meeting of noblemen and gentlemen at the Imperial Institute. When they learn that the Duke of Devonshire is going to take over into his own management the hotel at Lismore, many estimable people with a weakness for the *Morning Post* will rush to the river which has been called, not altogether absurdly, the Irish Rhine.

But, after all, the main causes of the neglect of Ireland are neither literary nor snobbish, but sternly practical. Ireland is very near, but yet very far. To the Londoner Dublin is much further away than Paris, and Connemara than Switzerland. The railway companies compete by their various routes both for Scotch and for Continental traffic, but there is no competition in the journey to Dublin. Hence the service to Dublin is so antiquated and expensive that we would strongly recommend any tourist who desires a short sea journey to choose the Stranraer route, and any one of the happily larger body of men who can sleep for a night at sea in comfortable berths to go by way of Milford or Liverpool or Fleetwood. They will find the journey much cheaper and more pleasant, and very little, if at all, slower. Some year or two hence there is to be an improved service by way of Dublin and Holyhead, and if the passenger rates are reduced at the same time, the old route might again be recommended. As it is, it has not been improved for twenty years. The Irish railways, to do them justice, have made very great advances within that period, and the three principal lines may be compared without discredit, so far as their passenger facilities are concerned, with those English companies which are not quite in the first rank. The service between Dublin and Belfast is disappointingly meagre, but the Great Southern and Great Southern and Western make very tolerable use of their opportunities. If a large tourist traffic, however, is to be attracted, all the companies must

be prepared to run rapid express trains, carrying third-class passengers in carriages not worse, let us say, than those of the London and South-Western. At present, the tourist in Ireland cannot be advised to travel third-class, and travelling in Ireland is therefore, for railway fares alone, at least 50 per cent. dearer than travelling in England.

The hotels, again, are in most cases execrable. In the average provincial town there is no place where the tourist can be sure of cleanliness and good, plain fare. Go off the beaten track, and, though you may hit upon a good hotel here and there, you will generally find yourself in a dirty and insanitary public-house which makes charges scarcely lower than those of a great London hotel. The Irish Tourist Association, largely owing to the efforts of Lord Crewe, has done a good deal to improve the hotels; but we fancy that it will be necessary for somebody who is less afraid of offending to do the really necessary work. Mr. Murray announces a new and revised edition of his Irish Guide Book, and if, as we trust is the case, the editor has carefully distinguished the good from the bad hotels he will have done his readers a service. From the point of view of the cyclist especially much deserves to be done. The roads may not be better than the roads in England, as they were when Arthur Young travelled in Ireland in the last century, but in most counties the main roads are fairly good, and if the wayside inns were improved Ireland might be made—climate apart—an excellent country to cycle through.

But what about that climate? It cannot, we fear, be denied that the man who wants to be braced—and so many men do now—will find better value for his money in Switzerland, or even at Cromer, than he will in the south-west of Ireland. Though Ireland has her bracing spots—Portrush is one—the greater part of the country is mild and damp to a degree that some people may find oppressive. The climate will always stand in the way of Ireland as a refuge for the large majority of young townsmen. But to the man of middle life, to whom violent exercise is not a necessity, whose nerves require to be rested, and whose best holiday is a long sleep, we can recommend the coast of Connaught or of Munster with a positive medical assurance. He can get a nerve rest in the sound of the Atlantic rollers that the easterly gusts of the North Sea will never give him. The rain, after a week or so, will cease to trouble him. The peasantry, so foreign and unaccustomed, though mostly English-speaking; will always give him enough of human interest to prevent him becoming jaded with rock and sea. And his woman-folk, if they find the dampness trying to Parisian millinery, will be reconciled by learning that the climate of Ireland is the best in the world for the complexion, as many a colleen's face can testify. For the son of the family there will be plenty of chances of good sport with gun and rod. He must not expect grouse drives. Ireland is not barbarous enough for that. But he will get as good wild sport as in any other country in Europe if he only manages to get the peasantry to show him how. We read in the *Times*, by the way, some rather ungrateful references to the poaching which is spoiling Irish rivers, but we would point out that the only very serious poachers are the landlords who net the mouths. The other poachers are only part of the landscape, good sportsmen, good company. As a final consideration, which is becoming yearly more practical, we may remind the man who is late in getting away for his holiday, that in Ireland most things are later, including grouse.

## FINANCE.

THE utter anarchy in Turkey has weighed upon the markets during the week. Everybody hopes that, somehow or other, peace will be maintained, but the agitation in Macedonia is regarded as exceedingly serious, and so is the Turkish defeat by the Druses. So far as Crete is concerned, the City inclines to believe that the Sultan will have to concede the reforms demanded by the Powers. Rumours that a large filibustering expedition for Cuba is being fitted out in the United States has also had an unfavourable influence: people fear that it may result in a quarrel between the United States and Spain. The spread of the insurrection in Rhodesia is also discouraging, and at first the City was inclined to take too serious a view of the Transvaal Government's demand for the trial of Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Beit. Speculative business has therefore been held in check; but, all the same, trade is steadily improving, as the railway traffic returns very clearly prove, and there is every evidence that the country never was more prosperous. At the fortnightly settlement, which began on Tuesday morning, it was made clear that the speculative account open for the rise in mining shares had been reduced during the preceding fortnight; and the carrying over rates therefore declined. In general markets, however, there has been rather an increase of speculation, and rates were slightly higher. In the South African department, which for the time being dominates all others, prices continued to fall until the afternoon of Tuesday. Since then there has been some recovery, though business is still quiet. The international department is better, especially; the news that the Argentine Senate has passed the Debt Unification Bill has caused a short demand for all kinds of Argentine securities, resulting in a marked rise. Home railway stocks are steady, and Consols and other high-class securities are better. In the American market there are rapid fluctuations from day to day. Bold operators buy on every decline, but they are quick to sell on every recovery. We can only repeat the advice we have given so often, that the investor should be very cautious how he buys American securities. It seems clear now that the approaching Democratic Convention will declare for the free coinage of silver. It is true that most people think the Democrats will be defeated, but, of course, it is too early yet to form any very definite opinion on the point. In any case, the St. Louis platform is quite sufficient to warn cautious people from incurring risk. Even if a good currency policy is pursued, it is always to be borne in mind that the Convention declares for the support by the United States of all American republics engaged in a dispute with Europe; and there is likewise the extreme danger that the Cuban insurrection may ultimately bring about a quarrel with Spain. For every reason then, political and financial, the market for United States securities is too unsettled and too risky for cautious people.

The near approach of the end of the half-year has led to some rise in the rates of interest and discount. The joint-stock banks are always in the habit of calling in loans when they are about to draw up their reports, so as to show very large cash reserves; and this of course has diminished the supply of loanable capital in the market. Then, during the week, a large instalment upon the Chinese loan has had to be paid, and there is a good deal of money still locked up in connection with the Barclay-Bevan amalgamation. All these causes, however, are very temporary; next week money will become quite abundant, and in all probability rates will decline again. We are approaching the holiday season, when business usually slackens. And, above all, gold is coming in from abroad in very large amounts. The silver market continues steady. The great American mine owners are selling very sparingly, and that keeps the

market firm, although the demand for silver is not great. Evidently the mine owners in the United States still incline to the view that somehow or other silver will come into larger use for monetary purposes in the Union. As a consequence, the India Council is still able to dispose of its drafts on very favourable terms. It reduced the amount offered for tender this week to 50 lacs. The applications were very large, and the average price obtained was a little over 1s. 2½d. per rupee.

## THIS MORNING'S PAPER.

BY A MERE OUTSIDER.

**SATURDAY.**—The Ministerial newspapers cast *Punch* into the shade. Nothing could well be more amusing than the glosses they put upon the desperate situation of the Government, and the frantic efforts to which they devote themselves to prove that after all it is the wicked Opposition that is alone responsible for the deadlock. They seem to have taken their cue from Mr. Chamberlain, whose speech yesterday afternoon is a gem of its kind. But one can forgive the bouncing vulgarity and unblushing misrepresentations of this speech because of the open confession of failure which it contains. Ministers, he declares, do not care an atom for anything in the Education Bill but the increased help for the voluntary schools. All the plans for killing the School Boards, strangling educational progress and so forth are mere fringe that may be dispensed with at once. This seems to mean that the Cabinet at its meeting to-day will abandon all those "vital provisions" about which Sir John Gorst has said so much of late. What Sir John Gorst himself will say none can tell; nor is it possible to understand how Mr. Balfour will submit to the abandonment of his previous scheme for hanging up the Bill until January. To be sure there are those who declare that this was not Mr. Balfour's scheme at all, but Mr. Chamberlain's. If that be so the furious anger of yesterday's speech becomes intelligible.

The Colonial Secretary has other troubles to face besides the failure of the Bedlamite Education Bill. President Kruger's demand for the prosecution of Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Beit puts him in a very tight place. There is not the slightest doubt that the President is justified in making this demand. It will be ridiculous indeed to punish Dr. Jameson and to leave Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Beit to go free. But the friends of the millionaires are numerous and powerful, and Mr. Chamberlain will not find it an easy matter to cope with them.

**Sunday.**—The growing custom of converting Sunday into a day out of town makes Saturday also very much of a blank day so far as politics are concerned. The Cabinet Ministers after their meeting yesterday hurried out of town, and hardly a politician was to be met with in the afternoon. The Cabinet meeting was rather a long one, but Mr. Chamberlain left early in order to do business at the Colonial Office. All that is known is that Ministers have changed their minds as to the future, but in what direction no man listeth. There is, however, a strong belief that the ship will be lightened to-morrow very materially by the throwing over of the "don't-care-an-atom" provisions of the Education Bill.

**Monday.**—If the *Times* has not been hoaxed the Ministerial surrender has gone even further than anybody had anticipated. To-night the Education Bill is to be withdrawn not in part, but as a whole! One must wait for the actual announcement before accepting this statement as true. It seems incredible that a Government which had boasted so loudly should have made so craven a surrender. Everybody on the Ministerial side now seems inclined to treat Mr. Balfour as the culprit responsible for the catastrophe. Responsible he is to a certain extent, but it was the arrogance, insolence,

and vanity of the Ministerial party as a whole that has led to the disaster. That the Government can recover from it is impossible. It must be left to linger on for its appointed time, until a new dissolution puts an end to its existence. In the meantime I see that the Tory newspapers still continue to talk about a "feeble and discredited Opposition." Surely the wisacres who use this language might have sense enough to see that the worst service they can do to their own Administration is to represent it as having succumbed to a weak and discredited Opposition. "Never despise your enemies" is a maxim that always holds good; but it is never so completely applicable as when the enemy has beaten you and you are trying to explain the reasons for your defeat.

I see that there is great irritation among all parties at the tone of the despatches in which Mr. Leyds demands the trial of Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Beit and the revocation of the Charter. Mr. Leyds is certainly not a master of diplomatic form, and he is doing very bad service to President Kruger at present; but there is really no reason why a demand that is in itself essentially just should be denied merely because it is made in unbecoming language. That Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Beit must stand their trial for their share in recent events is admitted by all fair-minded people. Mr. Leyds would have done better, however, if he had not sent these despatches to the Colonial Office.

*Tuesday.*—Words are hardly equal to the task of describing the scene in the House of Commons last night. Since the famous episode of the swine of Gadara there has been no such violent act of public *felo de se* as that which was committed by "the greatest Ministry of modern times" when its leader in the House of Commons rose to kill the chief measure of the session. The manner in which Mr. Balfour did his work was distinctly lacking in good taste. He attempted to prove that the Education Bill had been killed by the obstruction of the Opposition, whereas everybody in the House knew that this was not the case. One can forgive a great deal, however, to an orator in such "doleful dumps" as those in which Mr. Balfour found himself involved; and after the subsequent trouncing he received from Sir William Harcourt, one need not desire further punishment or humiliation for him.

There was a widespread belief at the clubs yesterday afternoon that Mr. Balfour had resigned, and it was only when it was seen that he occupied his usual place on the Treasury Bench that the rumour was dispelled. Unquestionably, if he had thought only of himself, he would have thrown up his thankless office. Thick-skinned as he is, he cannot be insensible to the attacks which have been made upon him by his own political associates during the past fortnight. Nor can he be unmindful of the kind of treatment which he has received from certain of his colleagues in the Cabinet. But to resign would be to desert his uncle and to complete the destruction of his party. There are many Tories who would not serve under Mr. Chamberlain, and there is no one except Mr. Balfour under whom Mr. Chamberlain would serve. Mr. Balfour is, therefore, for the moment indispensable. But that he must feel the terrible humiliation of his position is not to be doubted. As for his party, they are in the trough of the sea, and their mood is so dangerous that almost anything might happen.

*Wednesday.*—The bitterness of the Tories, both in the House and in the press, towards Mr. Balfour shows no signs of abatement, and is becoming positively indecent. The storm will, I suppose, pass away, but it must leave unpleasant memories behind. Mr. Balfour is a tough man, with the haughty, imperturbable temperament of one of his race. He despises mere popularity and vulgar clamour as much as his uncle does. But those who remember the years of his Irish Secretaryship cannot forget that more than once he betrayed a sudden sensitiveness that surprised both friends and foes, and an almost savage resentment that

was really startling. Very few who witnessed it can have forgotten his outburst of passionate indignation over the charge of "cynical brutality" which had been brought against him in connection with his treatment of Mr. O'Brien. It is quite possible that we may have a similar outburst now, and it is not impossible that it may be directed, not against the Tory newspapers or the outsiders of the party, but against some who are much more closely associated with the First Lord of the Treasury. In the meantime I may recall a note made in these pages more than two weeks ago, as to the curious growth among some of the new Tory members of a feeling of admiration for Mr. Chamberlain. His essentially vulgar but undeniably brilliant qualities as a debater are precisely those which are most likely to attract the "new men" of the pompous urban type, who constitute so large a proportion of the Tory majority in the present House of Commons. Mr. Balfour is "caviare to the general."

Venezuela is still a source of grave anxiety to the friends of peace. Some weeks ago I called attention to this fact, and to the disquieting rumours that were current in well-informed quarters regarding the possibilities of this business. I regret to find that among the highest authorities, especially on the American side, the uneasiness of which I have spoken is becoming more acute. Recent events on the disputed territory may not have much importance; but that which is important is the apparent impossibility of inducing Lord Salisbury and the Foreign Office to act with promptitude and vigour. The delays of the Foreign Secretary last autumn undoubtedly led to the outburst of mad Jingoism in the United States in December; yet this fact does not seem to have taught Lord Salisbury anything, and I hear that the Americans are again complaining that they cannot get replies from the Foreign Office. It will be nothing less than a crime if we allow a question so critical to drift.

*Thursday.*—Mr. George Dixon, I see, has at last plucked up his courage so far that he has declared his dislike not only of the Education Bill, but of other measures of the present Government. It would have been a good thing if Mr. Dixon had recorded his vote against the Bill for strangling the School Boards. But apparently his disapproval of the Ministerial measures does not lead him to go into the lobby against them. There are other Liberal Unionists, however, who are more outspoken, and nothing is more certain than that the "fusion" has received a terrible blow during the last few weeks. The fight in the House of Commons against the Agricultural Rating Bill will not do anything to remove the effect of that blow. The towns dislike that measure greatly, and many urban representatives declare openly that it will cost them their seats at the next election. In these circumstances it is just as well that Mr. Balfour should be straining the use of the closure to the uttermost in order to get the Bill through. Its full political effects will be seen not in the House but in the country.

*Friday.*—Judging by the proceedings in the House of Commons last night, it would look as though members of the Government were losing their manners as well as their heads. There was no shadow of excuse for Mr. Chaplin's rudeness to Mr. Robson, when he spoke of him as having evidently come from some scene of festivity, save that which is furnished by the state of obvious mental obfuscation to which Mr. Chaplin himself has been reduced in his attempts to defend a very bad Bill. I am old enough to remember Mr. Chaplin's maiden speech in the House. Its subject was (I think) the Irish Church Bill, and it was delivered with a fluency that delighted Mr. Gladstone, who forthwith complimented the new member warmly. But for most persons the chief interest of the speech consisted in the fact that the speaker was attired in a white hat, and clothes so light in colour as almost to look white also. It was at that time an unprecedented sight in the House of Commons. But nobody was rude enough to refer publicly to Mr. Chaplin's attire, or to deduce

from it the conclusion that he had been attending a "scene of festivity"—on Newmarket Heath to wit.

#### HOW THE DRUMMOND CASTLE WAS LOST.

A GREAT deal has been said in the Press, chiefly by miscellaneous correspondents, concerning the loss of the *Drummond Castle* off Ushant, and many suggestions have been made as to the cause of that terrible calamity, and the means of preventing similar occurrences in future. To those who are accustomed to travel by water between the English Channel and the Mediterranean or the South Atlantic, there can be no mystery as to the cause of the accident. All seamen know that the "set" of the Atlantic into the Bay of Biscay is a factor which must always be reckoned with but which can never be exactly calculated. It differs from day to day and almost from hour to hour; so that an allowance which is proved to be ample at one particular moment may be altogether inadequate on another occasion. The captain of the *Drummond Castle* did not, on the last voyage of the ship, make sufficient allowance for the strength of the current from west to east. As a consequence, on the night of the 16th inst. at half-past ten o'clock, when, according to his calculations, he should have been abreast of the Ushant light, with that light on his starboard side, or east of his position, he was actually running full steam ahead at a distance of some miles from Ushant, but with the island on his port side, or, in other words, to the west instead of the east. The result was that he crashed upon one or other of the chain of rocks which lie between Ushant and the mainland, striking the obstacle with such terrific violence that his ship foundered almost instantly, only three persons being rescued out of a total number of souls on board of 253.

We have said that it is impossible exactly to calculate the strength of the current which is always bearing from the Atlantic into the Bay of Biscay. It follows that a seaman is not to be blamed if he should under-estimate that current, and get into a wrong position with regard either to Ushant at the northern horn of the Bay or Finisterre at the south. But there is one duty plainly incumbent upon every commander who takes his ship across the troubled waters of the great gulf in which so many gallant vessels have found their last resting-place. He cannot tell exactly, when there is no opportunity of making an observation, how far he may be to the east or the west of a given line; but he ought to be able to calculate within a very few miles how far he has run since leaving his last landmark. The revolutions of the engines and the tale told by the automatic log enable him to know almost precisely how far he has run since leaving Finisterre when going north or Ushant when going south. That being the case, he knows to within a few minutes when he ought to see the light which he is trying to make, provided his calculation of the strength of the current has been an accurate one. The moment that he finds that he has run the estimated distance, say from Finisterre to Ushant, without making the light on the latter place, he is bound to exercise the most extreme caution before proceeding any further. The necessity is all the greater in thick weather, or when showers of rain are prevalent, as they too commonly are in the neighbourhood of those rocky wind-lashed shores. For not to see the light at the appointed time means that a miscalculation has been made, and that for aught that is known to the contrary, the ship may be in a position of extreme danger. A personal experience of the writer, which happened so recently as last November, will best illustrate the course which the prudent mariner takes in these circumstances. Sailing to the south in a large mail steamer, we—the "we" in this case representing

nearly six hundred living souls—were told that the light of Finisterre would be made soon after eleven o'clock at night. It was a boisterous day, and long before eleven o'clock most of the passengers had gone to rest. About half-past eleven the writer suddenly became conscious that the engines had stopped, and that the ship was rolling helplessly in the heavy sea. Going on deck he found the long promenade, where in fine weather a hundred men and women spend their time in one or other of the recognised amusements of ship life, absolutely deserted. The rain was falling in torrents; the vessel was rolling uneasily in the long Atlantic billows; the wind was howling furiously in the iron cordage overhead. Not a star nor a light was to be seen. The grimness of the scene was intensified by the thought of the five hundred men and women sleeping below, apparently unconscious of danger. At last a quartermaster came in sight, and explained the reason of the stoppage. "We can't pick up Finisterre light, and the captain won't move till he gets it." For two hours the ship remained practically in one spot, a few turns of the screw at long intervals sufficing to keep her on her proper course. Then the welcome thud, thud, of the screw was heard once more, and like a thing of life the giant steamer once again bounded southward. The looked-for light had not been seen, but the officer on watch had discovered another steamer coming up from the south on the port or eastern side of the ship. It was thus clear that the miscalculation of the current had been on the side of safety, and that the vessel had missed Finisterre light because she had gone too much to the westward. From that moment the captain's mind was at rest, and he pushed on knowing that a clear road lay before him as far as Tarifa Point.

If the captain of the *Drummond Castle* had followed the example of the captain of the vessel of which we have spoken, and had stopped his engines when, having run his course, he failed to pick up Ushant light, the terrible disaster of last week would almost certainly have been avoided. He would have lost a few hours, it is true; but what would that have been in comparison with the loss that was actually incurred? The fog would have risen in time, and long before the early dawn of the summer morning he would have recognised his position, and been enabled to escape from it. But, alas! he was "homeward bound," and the air of England was already beginning to be breathed alike by passengers and crew. A miscalculation had clearly been made, but with instinctive optimism the captain was convinced that the miscalculation was on the side of safety, and so, confident that he had given the deadly rocks of Ushant a sufficient offing, he pushed forward, as he thought, into the English Channel, only to find when it was too late that he was in the jaws of death. There is no need to teach the moral of this terrible incident. It is a moral as old as the hills, a moral which will never lack illustration so long as human nature is what it is; so long as custom begets confidence, and confidence degenerates, as it is too apt to do, into carelessness. The ship which has come and gone for years on a single course, which has weathered a hundred times the point of danger, is overwhelmed at last, not because Nature has forged new weapons to use against her, but because for one fatal moment the unsleeping vigilance which it is the business of the mariner to exercise has been forgotten. Let us find some comfort in the reflection that the change from life to death in the case of the passengers and sailors of the *Drummond Castle* was astoundingly rapid. One minute they were talking and thinking of the home for which they yearned, and which seemed so near; the next they had entered, almost without consciousness of impending peril, into that other home appointed in the end for all. Nor must we be unmindful of the sweet human sympathy and love which blossomed so abundantly on that frowning coast, and brightened even the graves of our hapless shipwrecked kinsmen and kinswomen.

## THE EVILS OF NEWSPAPER OPINION.

DISRAELI once remarked that the world is governed by sovereigns and statesmen, who need not trouble themselves about solemn, silly newspapers. This was said at a time when the chief Tory organ had presumed to differ from the leader of its party, and even to lecture him. This week we have had one of those repetitions of history which delight philosophers. The same Tory organ had the presumption to criticise Mr. Balfour's method of conducting the public business, and Mr. Balfour repeated Dizzy's maxim in a somewhat less bombastic version. The leader of the House does not read the papers, and he thinks the Press—however well instructed—is not in a position to form a full estimate of Parliamentary procedure. To this the chief Tory organ, and nearly all the journals which support the Government, have rejoined, with such a rating of their favourite Minister as we have not seen since journalism became a power in the land. True, the *Spectator* last week denounced as "wild nonsense" all the strictures of its own side on Mr. Balfour's misleadership; and yet he does not even read the *Spectator*! The superior Mr. Curzon is infected with the same august indifference. He has flatly refused to inquire into a serious statement made by the *Standard* correspondent with the Soudan expedition. Another question about the Soudan he met with the lofty declaration that "he did not know because he was not there." The suggestion that any news from the East which lacks the sanction of Mr. Curzon's personal observation must be dismissed as idle is quite in the spirit of Mr. Balfour's scorn of mere newspaper opinion. A Minister who bullies his majority because it is too large, and snaps his fingers at its journals because they speak the general discontent created by his bungling, has an intelligence which is obviously too bright and good for the democracy's daily food.

Yet, in this respect, Mr. Balfour is much more faithful than his party to the traditions of Toryism. Like the sovereigns and statesmen of Disraeli, he has an invincible dislike to unofficial opinion. Bismarck, at the height of his power, did not object to the Press, for he knew how to make his "reptiles" hiss; and the proper discharge of venom was a function of the State. Mr. Balfour is more like the Duke of Wellington, who did not care a twopenny damn for any form of popular expression. The Tory opposition to the repeal of the Stamp Duty was inspired solely by the belief that a cheap Press meant a fresh stimulus to seditious libel. The first Reform Act was bad enough; but to give a free rein to scribbling agitators, one of whom had actually described a sovereign Prince of this realm as "a corpulent man of fifty," was to open the sluices of profligacy and unreason. The purely Tory mind clings to what it supposes to be the principle of authority. Mr. Balfour has illustrated that principle in a famous book by a series of propositions which, if they were sound, would condemn the Reformation, canonise the Stuarts, and enthrone the Pope as the supreme arbiter of religion and politics. The maxim that, in practical affairs, one authority is good only until another overthrows it has not been grasped by sovereigns and statesmen, though it is the foundation of our system of party government. Born out of due time, and harassed by a restless democracy, Mr. Balfour solaces himself by dwelling in a clergyman's paradise where the newspapers are not taken in. Here authority plans schemes which nobody wants, and pooh-poohs the organs of opinion which are trying to save it from childish blunders. It is the old Tory temper, the old irritation against "those writing fellows" who have the effrontery to criticise their betters. Time was when such disturbers of the public peace had their reward in gaol or the pillory. Defoe, father of realism, journalism, and

other revolting "isms" with which orthodox Toryism has fought a losing battle, suffered public ignominy, accompanied by wholesome personal discomfort. Leigh Hunt, who dared to arraign the Prince Regent as a corrupt commonplace in an unwieldy body, was treated like a felon. In our degenerate times an academic philosopher who muddles the national business cannot lay his newspaper critics by the ears, but he can ostentatiously ignore the opinion they represent.

This habit of mind is not uncommon amongst people who have a stake in the country, and object to any discourse upon it save their own. Landowners, for example, have a deeply-rooted suspicion that everybody who does not own land is tempted to heed the newspapers, and even to write in them. The sheer irresponsibility of printer's ink is a constant snare to the landless mind. Naturally, the landowner is the only man who ought to speak with authority on the subject of land, whereas there are seditious persons who presume to write about it, though they have not a rood to their names. How can true authority be divorced from possessions? Full of this idea, the landowner will deplore the anonymity of leading articles, for, if it could be shown that the critic of land was named Brown, and lived on an upper floor in Gower Street, the public would at once see the absurdity of setting such a man's opinions against the stake in the country. Even amongst authors and artists there is a belief that the creator of property is the best judge of its value. Disraeli gave expression to this idea when he said that critics are those who have failed in literature and art. They tried to be authors and artists, and when they could not make property, they took to writing down others in newspapers. Their presumption was almost as great as that of editors who aspire to instruct sovereigns and statesmen. The Disraelian dictum is still quoted by people who regard the literary product as a sacred estate which criticism is designed to depreciate. They, too, have a stake in the country. They stand for the principle of authority, while the critic is a Jacobin who is bent on red ruin and the breaking up of laws. This theory has sometimes been successfully commended to juries by indignant advocates, who have demanded protection for the literary property of their clients against the wanton hostility of critics engaged in "bearing" the market. The case of the actor appeals even more impressively to the commercial conscience. Here is a man whose physical qualifications are the main components of his stock-in-trade. He struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and a miserable critic, who could not act to save his life, has the audacity to declare in print that the player's voice, limbs, and so forth, are unsuited to the particular impersonation. What is this but a gross attack upon property? It is endured for the most part because the Press has secured so strong a hold upon the unthinking democracy, though now and then a jury signifies its sympathy with the stake in the drama by convicting the critic of libel. But, as a rule, the only safeguard of the artist is his self-respect. Like Mr. Balfour, he does not read the newspapers.

We have often wondered that this melancholy problem has not engaged the attention of the Liberty and Property Defence League. The great doctrine of that corporation is that every man shall do what he likes with his own, even when it happens to be a nuisance to his neighbour. Lord Wemyss must surely see that a work of art is a piece of property which no stranger ought to be allowed to disparage. The owner of a wall is entitled to prevent the sticking of bills upon it; why should not the owner of a novel or a play, or a pair of actor's legs, or a Government Bill, prohibit any hostile comment on them in the journals? It would be so much more satisfactory to a man who never reads a newspaper to know there is nothing in it offensive to his *amour-propre*. It may be argued by

amateur logicians that Lord Wemyss ought to agitate equally for the suppression of newspaper adulation; but the praises of property, even when nobody marks them, are like fresh air which we breathe unconsciously; whereas foul vapours instantly excite our just resentment.

### THE DRAMA.

"THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL."—"ON THE MARCH."

"**I**L me faut aujourd'hui parler d'Hamlet; c'est horrible." So wrote M. Jules Lemaitre, before he had put on the gravity of an Academician, concerning the burden of discussing a play about which everything possible has already been said a thousand times over. I find myself in much the same case with *The School for Scandal*. After an essay of Elia (and one of the very best, too), after Hazlitt, after Leigh Hunt, what is there left for me to say about this comedy? Mr. Archer, I see, has found something new to say in a homily addressed to the actors and exhorting them to take the piece naturally, to humanise Sheridan. Excellent counsel, my dear Archer, applied to many a classic—to Shakespeare, for instance, in general, and in particular to *Romeo and Juliet*, which in your haste you condemned when they did their best to play it naturally not long ago at this very Lyceum. For the great "natural" classics, the classics which deal with fundamental passions and eternal verities, need revitalising from generation to generation, need "natural" playing according to the particular meaning of "nature" which each generation establishes for itself. But to employ this process with the non-natural classics, the comedies of manners—above all, to employ it with so artificial a writer as Sheridan—seems to me singularly inopportune. In a sense, of course, there are fundamental passions and eternal verities in *The School for Scandal*. Uxorious old husbands and giddy young wives, engaging spendthrifts and sententious hypocrites, scandal-mongering dames and fops we have always with us. But what have these types, as Sheridan presents them, in common with their modern successors? Which do we single out in Sir Peter and Lady Teazle, Charles and Joseph, Mrs. Candour and Sir Benjamin: the permanent element of human nature in them, or the peculiar shape which this element took in the later eighteenth century? There can be no doubt about the answer. It is the differences between these people and ourselves, not their likenesses to us, which give these their interest. It is not upon the substance, but upon the form, that our attention is riveted. And so I would beg the actors to disregard Mr. Archer's advice, and to play this comedy with every exaggeration of artifice, with a stilted self-consciousness, with a studied rhetoric, with an elaborate and *bizarre* fantasy—anything rather than to try and represent the characters as real people, which they never were. To give us, if it were possible, the illusion of reality in Sir Peter's domestic misfortunes or in Joseph's villainy would be to ruin the play. But it is not possible. I need not labour the point. Lamb has once and for all triumphantly shown in what consists the convention of conventional comedy.

Mrs. Patrick Campbell, at any rate, has had the intelligence to see the point. She has evidently aimed at playing Lady Teazle as Lady Teazle should be played—in the grand style. But there is one thing in Mrs. Campbell that is even stronger than her intelligence, and that is her temperament. Now her temperament is not at all in the grand style. A light and airy gaiety—the confident, slightly insolent, humour which Lady Teazle inherits partly from Congreve's Millamant, partly from Swift's Miss Notable (of the "Polite Conversation")—is beyond

her. She tends to the pert and the petulant, rather than to the easy and condescending superiority of the *grande coquette*. Vituperation, I should say (though it seems ungallant), is her strong point—a talent for the qualities Mr. George Meredith has noted in Lady Wishfort, "a flow of boudoir Billingsgate, the racy eloquence of the elevated fish-wife." Hence in the passage of mere *persiflage*, as in the scene of the scandalous college, in the earlier stages of the quarrel scene with Sir Peter, and of the interview with Joseph Surface, she produces no effect. But as soon as the pitch of emotion is heightened—when, for instance, Lady Teazle takes to quarrelling with Sir Peter in downright earnest—Mrs. Campbell gets her chance, and makes the most of it. Her temperament, too, inclines naturally to outbursts of indignant scorn, so that she is tempted, at the end of the screen-scene, to turn and rend Joseph in a tragic fashion quite out of harmony with the rest of the play. Again, her temperament is what, for want of a better word, we agree to call "modern"; it is a "bundle of nerves." This makes her a neuropathic Lady Teazle—a type which would have made Sheridan stare. The raw, instinctive country girl, whom Sir Peter is at the pains to describe for us as she was before her marriage, would never have developed into so complex a creature. And yet—even against my better judgment—Mrs. Campbell's Lady Teazle, unlike Sheridan's Lady Teazle though it is, interests me far more than an accurate rendering of the character would have done, for the simple reason that Mrs. Campbell's personality is stronger, more "magnetic"—to use the cant word once more—than Lady Teazle's. I see that complaints have been made of the somewhat fantastic magnificence of her dresses; but the period, I think, quite justifies extravagance in that direction, and, even if it does not, the result is a feast for the eye which I should be sorry to have missed.

The Sir Peter of Mr. William Farren is familiar to every playgoer. There you have the grand style without a single drawback. With our modern restlessness and quickness of apprehension, we get a little impatient at the prolonged pauses and the deliberate emphasis of every word; but an artificial part must be artificially played, and Mr. Farren knows what he is about. Contrasted with some of his present companions, he gives us the strange effect of some mellow old master from the National Gallery hung by mistake in the New English Art Club. Nothing, for instance, could be less in the tradition of artificial comedy than Mr. Forbes Robertson's Joseph—unless it be Mr. Fred Terry's Charles. Both are fair performances in their way, but it is the "natural" way—"natural," that is, to young men of 1896 masquerading in powder and patches—not the ample, emphatic, frankly artificial way congruous with the piece. Mr. Arthur Wood's Crabtree and Mr. Fred Thorne's Moses and Mr. Righton's Sir Oliver have, however, the true hearty smack of "old Sherry." Mr. Cyril Maude's Sir Benjamin is an outrageous caricature, Mr. Norman Forbes mistakes Trip for Mr. Bumble, and Mr. Jack Robertson sings "Here's to the Maiden" as though Charles Surface's drinking-party were a ballad-concert at St. James's Hall.

At the Prince of Wales's Theatre *Biarritz* has given place to a miscellaneous entertainment by no less than six collaborators, alive or dead, entitled *On the March*. The company is strangely assorted—Mr. Charles Brookfield (singing topical songs and dancing breakdowns! What will this versatile gentleman do next, I wonder?), and Miss Alice Atherton, and a Mr. Thomas Murray, who must, I suppose, be labelled "school of Knowles" (not Sheridan Knowles, but R. G. Knowles, known in music-hall bills as "the very peculiar American comedian"). It is a silly, but (on a warm June night, when one's brain gets addled) not an intolerable entertainment.

A. B. W.